

CIVIL CODE

**DIVISION 1. PERSONS
PART 2.6. CONFIDENTIALITY OF MEDICAL INFORMATION
CHAPTER 1. DEFINITIONS**

56. This part may be cited as the Confidentiality of Medical Information Act.

56.05. For purposes of this part:

(a) "Authorization" means permission granted in accordance with Section 56.11 or 56.21 for the disclosure of medical information.

(b) "Authorized recipient" means any person who is authorized to receive medical information pursuant to Section 56.10 or 56.20.

(c) "Contractor" means any person or entity that is a medical group, independent practice association, pharmaceutical benefits manager, or a medical service organization and is not a health care service plan or provider of health care. "Contractor" shall not include insurance institutions as defined in subdivision (k) of

Section 791.02 of the Insurance Code or pharmaceutical benefits managers licensed pursuant to the Knox-Keene Health Care Service Plan Act of 1975 (Chapter 2.2 (commencing with Section 1340) of Division 2 of the Health and Safety Code).

(d) "Health care service plan" means any entity regulated pursuant to the Knox-Keene Health Care Service Plan Act of 1975 (Chapter 2.2 (commencing with Section 1340) of Division 2 of the Health and Safety Code).

(e) "Licensed health care professional" means any person licensed or certified pursuant to Division 2 (commencing with Section 500) of the Business and Professions Code, the Osteopathic Initiative Act or the Chiropractic Initiative Act, or Division 2.5 (commencing with Section 1797) of the Health and Safety Code.

(f) "Medical information" means any individually identifiable information, in electronic or physical form, in possession of or derived from a provider of health care, health care service plan, or contractor regarding a patient's medical history, mental or physical condition, or treatment. "Individually identifiable" means that the medical information includes or contains any element of personal identifying information sufficient to allow identification of the individual, such as the patient's name, address, electronic mail address, telephone number, or social security number, or other information that, alone or in combination with other publicly available information, reveals the individual's identity.

(g) "Patient" means any natural person, whether or not still living, who received health care services from a provider of health care and to whom medical information pertains.

(h) "Provider of health care" means any person licensed or certified pursuant to Division 2 (commencing with Section 500) of the Business and Professions Code; any person licensed pursuant to the Osteopathic Initiative Act or the

Chiropractic Initiative Act; any person certified pursuant to Division 2.5 (commencing with Section 1797) of the Health and Safety Code; any clinic, health dispensary, or health facility licensed pursuant to Division 2 (commencing with Section 1200) of the Health and Safety Code. "Provider of health care" shall not include insurance institutions as defined in subdivision (k) of Section 791.02 of the Insurance Code.

56.06. (a) Any corporation organized for the primary purpose of maintaining medical information in order to make the information available to the patient or to a provider of health care at the request of the patient or a provider of health care, for purposes of diagnosis or treatment of the patient, shall be deemed to be a provider of health care subject to the requirements of this part. However, nothing in this section shall be construed to make a corporation specified in this subdivision a provider of health care for purposes of any law other than this part, including laws that specifically incorporate by reference the definitions of this part.

(b) Any corporation described in subdivision (a) shall maintain the same standards of confidentiality required of a provider of health care with respect to medical information disclosed to the corporation.

(c) Any corporation described in subdivision (a) shall be subject to the penalties for improper use and disclosure of medical information prescribed in this part.

56.07. (a) Except as provided in subdivision (c), upon the patient's written request, any corporation described in Section 56.06, or any other entity that compiles or maintains medical information for any reason, shall provide the patient, at no charge, with a copy of any medical profile, summary, or information maintained by the corporation or entity with respect to the patient.

(b) A request by a patient pursuant to this section shall not be deemed to be an authorization by the patient for the release or disclosure of any information to any person or entity other than the patient.

(c) This section shall not apply to any patient records that are subject to inspection by the patient pursuant to Section 123110 of the Health and Safety Code and shall not be deemed to limit the right of a health care provider to charge a fee for the preparation of a summary of patient records as provided in Section 123130 of the Health and Safety Code. This section shall not apply to a health care service plan licensed pursuant to Chapter 2.2 (commencing with Section 1340) of Division 2 of the Health and Safety Code or a disability insurer licensed pursuant to the Insurance Code. This section shall not apply to medical information compiled or maintained by a fire and casualty insurer or its retained counsel in the regular course of investigating or litigating a claim under a policy of insurance that it has written. For the purposes of this section, a fire and casualty insurer is an insurer writing policies that may be sold by a fire and casualty licensee pursuant to Section 1625 of the Insurance Code.

CHAPTER 2. DISCLOSURE OF MEDICAL INFORMATION BY PROVIDERS

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56.10. (a) No provider of health care, health care service plan, or contractor shall disclose medical information regarding a patient of the provider of health care or an enrollee or subscriber of a health care service plan without first obtaining an authorization, except as provided in subdivision (b) or (c).

(b) A provider of health care, a health care service plan, or a contractor shall disclose medical information if the disclosure is compelled by any of the following:

(1) By a court pursuant to an order of that court.

(2) By a board, commission, or administrative agency for purposes of adjudication pursuant to its lawful authority.

(3) By a party to a proceeding before a court or administrative agency pursuant to a subpoena, subpoena duces tecum, notice to appear served pursuant to Section 1987 of the Code of Civil Procedure, or any provision authorizing discovery in a proceeding before a court or administrative agency.

(4) By a board, commission, or administrative agency pursuant to an investigative subpoena issued under Article 2 (commencing with Section 11180) of Chapter 2 of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

(5) By an arbitrator or arbitration panel, when arbitration is lawfully requested by either party, pursuant to a subpoena duces tecum issued under Section 1282.6 of the Code of Civil Procedure, or any other provision authorizing discovery in a proceeding before an arbitrator or arbitration panel.

(6) By a search warrant lawfully issued to a governmental law enforcement agency.

(7) By the patient or the patient's representative pursuant to Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 123100) of Part 1 of Division 106 of the Health and Safety Code.

(8) By a coroner, when requested in the course of an investigation by the coroner's office for the purpose of identifying the decedent or locating next of kin, or when investigating deaths that may involve public health concerns, organ or tissue donation, child abuse, elder abuse, suicides, poisonings, accidents, sudden infant death, suspicious deaths, unknown deaths, or criminal deaths, or when otherwise authorized by the decedent's representative. Medical information requested by the coroner under this paragraph shall be limited to information regarding the patient who is the decedent and who is the subject of the investigation and shall be disclosed to the coroner without delay upon request.

(9) When otherwise specifically required by law.

(c) A provider of health care, or a health care service plan may disclose medical information as follows:

(1) The information may be disclosed to providers of health care, health care service plans, contractors or other health care professionals or facilities for purposes of diagnosis or treatment of the patient. This includes, in an emergency situation, the communication of patient information by radio transmission or other means between emergency medical personnel at the scene of an emergency, or in an emergency medical transport vehicle, and

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emergency medical personnel at a health facility licensed pursuant to Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 1250) of Division 2 of the Health and Safety Code.

(2) The information may be disclosed to an insurer, employer, health care service plan, hospital service plan, employee benefit plan, governmental authority, contractor or any other person or entity responsible for paying for health care services rendered to the patient, to the extent necessary to allow responsibility for payment to be determined and payment to be made. If (A) the patient is, by reason of a comatose or other disabling medical condition, unable to consent to the disclosure of medical information and (B) no other arrangements have been made to pay for the health care services being rendered to the patient, the information may be disclosed to a governmental authority to the extent necessary to determine the patient's eligibility for, and to obtain, payment under a governmental program for health care services provided to the patient. The information may also be disclosed to another provider of health care or health care service plan as necessary to assist the other provider or health care service plan in obtaining payment for health care services rendered by that provider of health care or health care service plan to the patient.

(3) The information may be disclosed to any person or entity that provides billing, claims management, medical data processing, or other administrative services for providers of health care or health care service plans or for any of the persons or entities specified in paragraph (2). However, no information so disclosed shall be further disclosed by the recipient in any way that would be violative of this part.

(4) The information may be disclosed to organized committees and agents of professional societies or of medical staffs of licensed hospitals, licensed health care service plans, professional standards review organizations, independent medical review organizations and their selected reviewers, utilization and quality control peer review organizations as established by Congress in Public Law 97-248 in 1982, contractor's or persons or organizations insuring, responsible for, or defending professional liability that a provider may incur, if the committees, agents, health care service plans, organizations, reviewers, contractors, or persons are engaged in reviewing the competence or qualifications of health care professionals or in reviewing health care services with respect to medical necessity, level of care, quality of care, or justification of charges.

(5) The information in the possession of any provider of health care or health care service plan may be reviewed by any private or public body responsible for licensing or accrediting the provider of health care or health care service plan. However, no patient identifying medical information may be removed from the premises except as expressly permitted or required elsewhere by law, nor shall that information be further disclosed by the recipient in any way that would violate this part.

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(6) The information may be disclosed to the county coroner in the course of an investigation by the coroner's office when requested for all purposes not included in paragraph (8) of subdivision (b).

(7) The information may be disclosed to public agencies, clinical investigators, including investigators conducting epidemiologic studies, health care research organizations, and accredited public or private nonprofit educational or health care institutions for bona fide research purposes. However, no information so disclosed shall be further disclosed by the recipient in any way that would disclose the identity of any patient or be violative of this part.

(8) A provider of health care or health care service plan that has created medical information as a result of employment-related health care services to an employee conducted at the specific prior written request and expense of the employer may disclose to the employee's employer that part of the information that:

(A) Is relevant in a law suit, arbitration, grievance, or other claim or challenge to which the employer and the employee are parties and in which the patient has placed in issue his or her medical history, mental or physical condition, or treatment, provided that information may only be used or disclosed in connection with that proceeding.

(B) Describes functional limitations of the patient that may entitle the patient to leave from work for medical reasons or limit the patient's fitness to perform his or her present employment, provided that no statement of medical cause is included in the information disclosed.

(9) Unless the provider of health care or health care service plan is notified in writing of an agreement by the sponsor, insurer, or administrator to the contrary, the information may be disclosed to a sponsor, insurer, or administrator of a group or individual insured or uninsured plan or policy that the patient seeks coverage by or benefits from, if the information was created by the provider of health care or health care service plan as the result of services conducted at the specific prior written request and expense of the sponsor, insurer, or administrator for the purpose of evaluating the application for coverage or benefits.

(10) The information may be disclosed to a health care service plan by providers of health care that contract with the health care service plan and may be transferred among providers of health care that contract with the health care service plan, for the purpose of administering the health care service plan. Medical information may not otherwise be disclosed by a health care service plan except in accordance with the provisions of this part.

(11) Nothing in this part shall prevent the disclosure by a provider of health care or a health care service plan to an insurance institution, agent, or support organization, subject to Article 6.6 (commencing with Section 791) of Part 2 of Division 1 of the Insurance Code, of medical information if the insurance institution, agent, or support organization has complied with all requirements for obtaining the information pursuant to Article 6.6 (commencing with Section 791) of Part 2 of Division 1 of the Insurance Code.

(12) The information relevant to the patient's condition and care and treatment provided may be disclosed to a probate court investigator engaged in determining the need for an initial conservatorship or continuation of an existent conservatorship, if the patient is unable to give informed consent, or to a probate court investigator, probation officer, or domestic relations investigator engaged in determining the need for an initial guardianship or continuation of an existent guardianship.

(13) The information may be disclosed to an organ procurement organization or a tissue bank processing the tissue of a decedent for transplantation into the body of another person, but only with respect to the donating decedent, for the purpose of aiding the transplant. For the purpose of this paragraph, the terms "tissue bank" and "tissue" have the same meaning as defined in Section 1635 of the Health and Safety Code.

(14) The information may be disclosed when the disclosure is otherwise specifically authorized by law, such as the voluntary reporting, either directly or indirectly, to the federal Food and Drug Administration of adverse events related to drug products or medical device problems.

(15) Basic information including the patient's name, city of residence, age, sex, and general condition may be disclosed to a state or federally recognized disaster relief organization for the purpose of responding to disaster welfare inquiries.

(16) The information may be disclosed to a third party for purposes of encoding, encrypting, or otherwise anonymizing data. However, no information so disclosed shall be further disclosed by the recipient in any way that would be violative of this part, including the unauthorized manipulation of coded or encrypted medical information that reveals individually identifiable medical information.

(17) For purposes of disease management programs and services as defined in Section 1399.901 of the Health and Safety Code, information may be disclosed as follows: (A) to any entity contracting with a health care service plan or the health care service plan's contractors to monitor or administer care of enrollees for a covered benefit, provided that the disease management services and care are authorized by a treating physician or (B) to any disease management organization, as defined in Section 1399.900 of the Health and Safety Code, that complies fully with the physician authorization requirements of Section 1399.902 of the Health and Safety Code, provided that the health care service plan or its contractor provides or has provided a description of the disease management services to a treating physician or to the health care service plan's or contractor's network of physicians. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to require physician authorization for the care or treatment of the adherents of any well-recognized church or religious denomination who depend solely upon prayer or spiritual means for healing in the practice of the religion of that church or denomination.

(d) Except to the extent expressly authorized by the patient or enrollee or subscriber or as provided by subdivisions (b) and (c), no provider of health care, health care service plan contractor, or corporation and its subsidiaries and

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affiliates shall intentionally share, sell, or otherwise use any medical information for any purpose not necessary to provide health care services to the patient.

(e) Except to the extent expressly authorized by the patient or enrollee or subscriber or as provided by subdivisions (b) and (c), no contractor or corporation and its subsidiaries and affiliates shall further disclose medical information regarding a patient of the provider of health care or an enrollee or subscriber of a health care service plan or insurer or self-insured employer received under this section to any person or entity that is not engaged in providing direct health care services to the patient or his or her provider of health care or health care service plan or insurer or self-insured employer.

(f) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2003, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, that is enacted before January 1, 2003, deletes or extends that date.

56.10. (a) No provider of health care, health care service plan, or contractor shall disclose medical information regarding a patient of the provider of health care or an enrollee or subscriber of a health care service plan without first obtaining an authorization, except as provided in subdivision (b) or (c).

(b) A provider of health care, a health care service plan, or a contractor shall disclose medical information if the disclosure is compelled by any of the following:

(1) By a court pursuant to an order of that court.

(2) By a board, commission, or administrative agency for purposes of adjudication pursuant to its lawful authority.

(3) By a party to a proceeding before a court or administrative agency pursuant to a subpoena, subpoena duces tecum, notice to appear served pursuant to Section 1987 of the Code of Civil Procedure, or any provision authorizing discovery in a proceeding before a court or administrative agency.

(4) By a board, commission, or administrative agency pursuant to an investigative subpoena issued under Article 2 (commencing with Section 11180) of Chapter 2 of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

(5) By an arbitrator or arbitration panel, when arbitration is lawfully requested by either party, pursuant to a subpoena duces tecum issued under Section 1282.6 of the Code of Civil Procedure, or any other provision authorizing discovery in a proceeding before an arbitrator or arbitration panel.

(6) By a search warrant lawfully issued to a governmental law enforcement agency.

(7) By the patient or the patient's representative pursuant to Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 123100) of Part 1 of Division 106 of the Health and Safety Code.

(8) When otherwise specifically required by law.

(c) A provider of health care, or a health care service plan may disclose medical information as follows:

(1) The information may be disclosed to providers of health care, health care service plans, contractors, or other health care professionals or facilities for

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purposes of diagnosis or treatment of the patient. This includes, in an emergency situation, the communication of patient information by radio transmission or other means between emergency medical personnel at the scene of an emergency, or in an emergency medical transport vehicle, and emergency medical personnel at a health facility licensed pursuant to Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 1250) of Division 2 of the Health and Safety Code.

(2) The information may be disclosed to an insurer, employer, health care service plan, hospital service plan, employee benefit plan, governmental authority, contractor, or any other person or entity responsible for paying for health care services rendered to the patient, to the extent necessary to allow responsibility for payment to be determined and payment to be made. If (A) the patient is, by reason of a comatose or other disabling medical condition, unable to consent to the disclosure of medical information and (B) no other arrangements have been made to pay for the health care services being rendered to the patient, the information may be disclosed to a governmental authority to the extent necessary to determine the patient's eligibility for, and to obtain, payment under a governmental program for health care services provided to the patient. The information may also be disclosed to another provider of health care or health care service plan as necessary to assist the other provider or health care service plan in obtaining payment for health care services rendered by that provider of health care or health care service plan to the patient.

(3) The information may be disclosed to any person or entity that provides billing, claims management, medical data processing, or other administrative services for providers of health care or health care service plans or for any of the persons or entities specified in paragraph (2). However, no information so disclosed shall be further disclosed by the recipient in any way that would be violative of this part.

(4) The information may be disclosed to organized committees and agents of professional societies or of medical staffs of licensed hospitals, licensed health care service plans, professional standards review organizations, independent medical review organizations and their selected reviewers, utilization and quality control peer review organizations as established by Congress in Public Law 97-248 in 1982, contractors, or persons or organizations insuring, responsible for, or defending professional liability that a provider may incur, if the committees, agents, health care service plans, organizations, reviewers, contractors, or persons are engaged in reviewing the competence or qualifications of health care professionals or in reviewing health care services with respect to medical necessity, level of care, quality of care, or justification of charges.

(5) The information in the possession of any provider of health care or health care service plan may be reviewed by any private or public body responsible for licensing or accrediting the provider of health care or health care service plan. However, no patient identifying medical information may be removed from the premises except as expressly permitted or required elsewhere by law, nor shall that information be further disclosed by the recipient in any way that would violate this part.

(6) The information may be disclosed to the county coroner in the course of an investigation by the coroner's office.

(7) The information may be disclosed to public agencies, clinical investigators, including investigators conducting epidemiologic studies, health care research organizations, and accredited public or private nonprofit educational or health care institutions for bona fide research purposes. However, no information so disclosed shall be further disclosed by the recipient in any way that would disclose the identity of any patient or be violative of this part.

(8) A provider of health care or health care service plan that has created medical information as a result of employment-related health care services to an employee conducted at the specific prior written request and expense of the employer may disclose to the employee's employer that part of the information that:

(A) Is relevant in a law suit, arbitration, grievance, or other claim or challenge to which the employer and the employee are parties and in which the patient has placed in issue his or her medical history, mental or physical condition, or treatment, provided that information may only be used or disclosed in connection with that proceeding.

(B) Describes functional limitations of the patient that may entitle the patient to leave from work for medical reasons or limit the patient's fitness to perform his or her present employment, provided that no statement of medical cause is included in the information disclosed.

(9) Unless the provider of health care or health care service plan is notified in writing of an agreement by the sponsor, insurer, or administrator to the contrary, the information may be disclosed to a sponsor, insurer, or administrator of a group or individual insured or uninsured plan or policy that the patient seeks coverage by or benefits from, if the information was created by the provider of health care or health care service plan as the result of services conducted at the specific prior written request and expense of the sponsor, insurer, or administrator for the purpose of evaluating the application for coverage or benefits.

(10) The information may be disclosed to a health care service plan by providers of health care that contract with the health care service plan and may be transferred among providers of health care that contract with the health care service plan, for the purpose of administering the health care service plan. Medical information may not otherwise be disclosed by a health care service plan except in accordance with the provisions of this part.

(11) Nothing in this part shall prevent the disclosure by a provider of health care or a health care service plan to an insurance institution, agent, or support organization, subject to Article 6.6 (commencing with Section 791) of Part 2 of Division 1 of the Insurance Code, of medical information if the insurance institution, agent, or support organization has complied with all requirements for obtaining the information pursuant to Article 6.6 (commencing with Section 791) of Part 2 of Division 1 of the Insurance Code.

(12) The information relevant to the patient's condition and care and treatment provided may be disclosed to a probate court investigator engaged in

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determining the need for an initial conservatorship or continuation of an existent conservatorship, if the patient is unable to give informed consent, or to a probate court investigator, probation officer, or domestic relations investigator engaged in determining the need for an initial guardianship or continuation of an existent guardianship.

(13) The information may be disclosed to an organ procurement organization or a tissue bank processing the tissue of a decedent for transplantation into the body of another person, but only with respect to the donating decedent, for the purpose of aiding the transplant. For the purpose of this paragraph, the terms "tissue bank" and "tissue" have the same meaning as defined in Section 1635 of the Health and Safety Code.

(14) The information may be disclosed when the disclosure is otherwise specifically authorized by law, such as the voluntary reporting, either directly or indirectly, to the federal Food and Drug Administration of adverse events related to drug products or medical device problems.

(15) Basic information including the patient's name, city of residence, age, sex, and general condition may be disclosed to a state or federally recognized disaster relief organization for the purpose of responding to disaster welfare inquiries.

(16) The information may be disclosed to a third party for purposes of encoding, encrypting, or otherwise anonymizing data. However, no information so disclosed shall be further disclosed by the recipient in any way that would be violative of this part, including the unauthorized manipulation of coded or encrypted medical information that reveals individually identifiable medical information.

(17) For purposes of disease management programs and services as defined in Section 1399.901 of the Health and Safety Code, information may be disclosed as follows: (A) to any entity contracting with a health care service plan or the health care service plan's contractors to monitor or administer care of enrollees for a covered benefit, provided that the disease management services and care are authorized by a treating physician, or (B) to any disease management organization, as defined in Section 1399.900 of the Health and Safety Code, that complies fully with the physician authorization requirements of Section 1399.902 of the Health and Safety Code, provided that the health care service plan or its contractor provides or has provided a description of the disease management services to a treating physician or to the health care service plan's or contractor's network of physicians. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to require physician authorization for the care or treatment of the adherents of any well-recognized church or religious denomination who depend solely upon prayer or spiritual means for healing in the practice of the religion of that church or denomination.

(d) Except to the extent expressly authorized by the patient or enrollee or subscriber or as provided by subdivisions (b) and (c), no provider of health care, health care service plan contractor, or corporation and its subsidiaries and affiliates shall intentionally share, sell, or otherwise use any medical information for any purpose not necessary to provide health care services to the patient.

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(e) Except to the extent expressly authorized by the patient or enrollee or subscriber or as provided by subdivisions (b) and (c), no contractor or corporation and its subsidiaries and affiliates shall further disclose medical information regarding a patient of the provider of health care or an enrollee or subscriber of a health care service plan or insurer or self-insured employer received under this section to any person or entity that is not engaged in providing direct health care services to the patient or his or her provider of health care or health care service plan or insurer or self-insured employer.

(f) This section shall become operative January 1, 2003.

56.101. Every provider of health care, health care service plan, or contractor who creates, maintains, preserves, stores, abandons, destroys, or disposes of medical records shall do so in a manner that preserves the confidentiality of the information contained therein. Any provider of health care, health care service plan, or contractor who negligently creates, maintains, preserves, stores, abandons, destroys, or disposes of medical records shall be subject to the remedies and penalties provided under subdivisions (b) and (c) of Section 56.36.

56.104. (a) Notwithstanding subdivision (c) of Section 56.10, no provider of health care, health care service plan, or contractor may release medical information to persons or entities authorized by law to receive that information pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 56.10, if the requested information specifically relates to the patient's participation in outpatient treatment with a psychotherapist, unless the person or entity requesting that information submits to the patient pursuant to subdivision (b) and to the provider of health care, health care service plan, or contractor a written request, signed by the person requesting the information or an authorized agent of the entity requesting the information, that includes all of the following:

(1) The specific information relating to a patient's participation in outpatient treatment with a psychotherapist being requested and its specific intended use or uses.

(2) The length of time during which the information will be kept before being destroyed or disposed of. A person or entity may extend that timeframe, provided that the person or entity notifies the provider, plan, or contractor of the extension. Any notification of an extension shall include the specific reason for the extension, the intended use or uses of the information during the extended time, and the expected date of the destruction of the information.

(3) A statement that the information will not be used for any purpose other than its intended use.

(4) A statement that the person or entity requesting the information will destroy the information and all copies in the person's or entity's possession or control, will cause it to be destroyed, or will return the information and all copies of it before or immediately after the length of time specified in paragraph (2) has expired.

(b) The person or entity requesting the information shall submit a copy of the written request required by this section to the patient within 30 days of receipt of

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the information requested, unless the patient has signed a written waiver in the form of a letter signed and submitted by the patient to the provider of health care or health care service plan waiving notification.

(c) For purposes of this section, "psychotherapist" means a person who is both a "psychotherapist" as defined in Section 1010 of the Evidence Code and a "provider of health care" as defined in subdivision (d) of Section 56.05 of the Civil Code.

(d) This section does not apply to the disclosure or use of medical information by a law enforcement agency or a regulatory agency when required for an investigation of unlawful activity or for licensing, certification, or regulatory purposes, unless the disclosure is otherwise prohibited by law.

(e) Nothing in this section shall be construed to grant any additional authority to a provider of health care, health care service plan, or contractor to disclose information to a person or entity without the patient's consent.

56.105. Whenever, prior to the service of a complaint upon a defendant in any action arising out of the professional negligence of a person holding a valid physician's and surgeon's certificate issued pursuant to Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 2000) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code, a demand for settlement or offer to compromise is made on a patient's behalf, the demand or offer shall be accompanied by an authorization to disclose medical information to persons or organizations insuring, responsible for, or defending professional liability that the certificate holder may incur. The authorization shall be in accordance with Section 56.11 and shall authorize disclosure of that information that is necessary to investigate issues of liability and extent of potential damages in evaluating the merits of the demand for settlement or offer to compromise.

Notice of any request for medical information made pursuant to an authorization as provided by this section shall be given to the patient or the patient's legal representative. The notice shall describe the inclusive subject matter and dates of the materials requested and shall also authorize the patient or the patient's legal representative to receive, upon request, copies of the information at his or her expense.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to waive or limit any applicable privileges set forth in the Evidence Code except for the disclosure of medical information subject to the patient's authorization. Nothing in this section shall be construed as authorizing a representative of any person from whom settlement has been demanded to communicate in violation of the physician-patient privilege with a treating physician except for the medical information request.

The requirements of this section are independent of the requirements of Section 364 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

56.11. Any person or entity that wishes to obtain medical information pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 56.10, other than a person or entity authorized to receive medical information pursuant to subdivision (b) or (c) of Section 56.10, shall obtain a valid authorization for the release of this information.

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An authorization for the release of medical information by a provider of health care, a health care service plan, or contractor shall be valid if it:

(a) Is handwritten by the person who signs it or is in typeface no smaller than 8-point type.

(b) Is clearly separate from any other language present on the same page and is executed by a signature which serves no other purpose than to execute the authorization.

(c) Is signed and dated by one of the following:

(1) The patient. A patient who is a minor may only sign an authorization for the release of medical information obtained by a provider of health care, health care service plan, or contractor in the course of furnishing services to which the minor could lawfully have consented under Part 1 (commencing with Section 25) or Part 2.7 (commencing with Section 60).

(2) The legal representative of the patient, if the patient is a minor or an incompetent. However, authorization may not be given under this subdivision for the disclosure of medical information obtained by the provider of health care, a health care service plan, or a contractor in the course of furnishing services to which a minor patient could lawfully have consented under Part 1 (commencing with Section 25) or Part 2.7 (commencing with Section 60).

(3) The spouse of the patient or the person financially responsible for the patient, where the medical information is being sought for the sole purpose of processing an application for health insurance or for enrollment in a nonprofit hospital plan, a health care service plan, or an employee benefit plan, and where the patient is to be an enrolled spouse or dependent under the policy or plan.

(4) The beneficiary or personal representative of a deceased patient.

(d) States the specific uses and limitations on the types of medical information to be disclosed.

(e) States the name or functions of the provider of health care, health care service plan, or contractor that may disclose the medical information.

(f) States the name or functions of the persons or entities authorized to receive the medical information.

(g) States the specific uses and limitations on the use of the medical information by the persons or entities authorized to receive the medical information.

(h) States a specific date after which the provider of health care, health care service plan, or contractor is no longer authorized to disclose the medical information.

(i) Advises the person signing the authorization of the right to receive a copy of the authorization.

56.12. Upon demand by the patient or the person who signed an authorization, a provider of health care, a health care service plan, or contractor possessing the authorization shall furnish a true copy thereof.

56.13. A recipient of medical information pursuant to an authorization as provided by this chapter or pursuant to the provisions of subdivision (c) of

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Section 56.10 may not further disclose that medical information except in accordance with a new authorization that meets the requirements of Section 56.11, or as specifically required or permitted by other provisions of this chapter or by law.

56.14. A provider of health care, health care service plan, or contractor that discloses medical information pursuant to the authorizations required by this chapter shall communicate to the person or entity to which it discloses the medical information any limitations in the authorization regarding the use of the medical information. No provider of health care, health care service plan, or contractor that has attempted in good faith to comply with this provision shall be liable for any unauthorized use of the medical information by the person or entity to which the provider, plan, or contractor disclosed the medical information.

56.15. Nothing in this part shall be construed to prevent a person who could sign the authorization pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 56.11 from cancelling or modifying an authorization. However, the cancellation or modification shall be effective only after the provider of health care actually receives written notice of the cancellation or modification.

56.16. Unless there is a specific written request by the patient to the contrary, nothing in this part shall be construed to prevent a provider, upon an inquiry concerning a specific patient, from releasing at its discretion any of the following information: the patient's name, address, age, and sex; a general description of the reason for treatment (whether an injury, a burn, poisoning, or some unrelated condition); the general nature of the injury, burn, poisoning, or other condition; the general condition of the patient; and any information that is not medical information as defined in subdivision (c) of Section 56.05.

TITLE 1.8. PERSONAL DATA

CHAPTER 1. INFORMATION PRACTICES ACT OF 1977

Article 1. General Provisions and Legislative Findings

1798. This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the Information Practices Act of 1977.

1798.1. The Legislature declares that the right to privacy is a personal and fundamental right protected by Section 1 of Article I of the Constitution of California and by the United States Constitution and that all individuals have a right of privacy in information pertaining to them. The Legislature further makes the following findings:

(a) The right to privacy is being threatened by the indiscriminate collection, maintenance, and dissemination of personal information and the lack of effective laws and legal remedies.

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(b) The increasing use of computers and other sophisticated information technology has greatly magnified the potential risk to individual privacy that can occur from the maintenance of personal information.

(c) In order to protect the privacy of individuals, it is necessary that the maintenance and dissemination of personal information be subject to strict limits.

Article 2. Definitions

1798.3. As used in this chapter:

(a) The term "personal information" means any information that is maintained by an agency that identifies or describes an individual, including, but not limited to, his or her name, social security number, physical description, home address, home telephone number, education, financial matters, and medical or employment history. It includes statements made by, or attributed to, the individual.

(b) The term "agency" means every state office, officer, department, division, bureau, board, commission, or other state agency, except that the term agency shall not include:

(1) The California Legislature.

(2) Any agency established under Article VI of the California Constitution.

(3) The State Compensation Insurance Fund, except as to any records which contain personal information about the employees of the State Compensation Insurance Fund.

(4) A local agency, as defined in subdivision (b) of Section 6252 of the Government Code.

(c) The term "disclose" means to disclose, release, transfer, disseminate, or otherwise communicate all or any part of any record orally, in writing, or by electronic or any other means to any person or entity.

(d) The term "individual" means a natural person.

(e) The term "maintain" includes maintain, acquire, use, or disclose.

(f) The term "person" means any natural person, corporation, partnership, limited liability company, firm, or association.

(g) The term "record" means any file or grouping of information about an individual that is maintained by an agency by reference to an identifying particular such as the individual's name, photograph, finger or voice print, or a number or symbol assigned to the individual.

(h) The term "system of records" means one or more records, which pertain to one or more individuals, which is maintained by any agency, from which information is retrieved by the name of an individual or by some identifying number, symbol or other identifying particular assigned to the individual.

(i) The term "governmental entity," except as used in Section 1798.26, means any branch of the federal government or of the local government.

(j) The term "commercial purpose" means any purpose which has financial gain as a major objective. It does not include the gathering or dissemination of newsworthy facts by a publisher or broadcaster.

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(k) The term "regulatory agency" means the Department of Financial Institutions, the Department of Corporations, the Department of Insurance, the Department of Real Estate, and agencies of the United States or of any other state responsible for regulating financial institutions.

Article 5. Agency Requirements

1798.14. Each agency shall maintain in its records only personal information which is relevant and necessary to accomplish a purpose of the agency required or authorized by the California Constitution or statute or mandated by the federal government.

1798.15. Each agency shall collect personal information to the greatest extent practicable directly from the individual who is the subject of the information rather than from another source.

1798.16. (a) Whenever an agency collects personal information, the agency shall maintain the source or sources of the information, unless the source is the data subject or he or she has received a copy of the source document, including, but not limited to, the name of any source who is an individual acting in his or her own private or individual capacity. If the source is an agency, governmental entity or other organization, such as a corporation or association, this requirement can be met by maintaining the name of the agency, governmental entity, or organization, as long as the smallest reasonably identifiable unit of that agency, governmental entity, or organization is named.

(b) On or after July 1, 2001, unless otherwise authorized by the Department of Information Technology pursuant to Executive Order D-3-99, whenever an agency electronically collects personal information, as defined by Section 11015.5 of the Government Code, the agency shall retain the source or sources or any intermediate form of the information, if either are created or possessed by the agency, unless the source is the data subject that has requested that the information be discarded or the data subject has received a copy of the source document.

(c) The agency shall maintain the source or sources of the information in a readily accessible form so as to be able to provide it to the data subject when they inspect any record pursuant to Section 1798.34. This section shall not apply if the source or sources are exempt from disclosure under the provisions of this chapter.

1798.17. Each agency shall provide on or with any form used to collect personal information from individuals the notice specified in this section. When contact with the individual is of a regularly recurring nature, an initial notice followed by a periodic notice of not more than one-year intervals shall satisfy this requirement. This requirement is also satisfied by notification to individuals of the availability of the notice in annual tax-related pamphlets or booklets provided for them. The notice shall include all of the following:

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(a) The name of the agency and the division within the agency that is requesting the information.

(b) The title, business address, and telephone number of the agency official who is responsible for the system of records and who shall, upon request, inform an individual regarding the location of his or her records and the categories of any persons who use the information in those records.

(c) The authority, whether granted by statute, regulation, or executive order which authorizes the maintenance of the information.

(d) With respect to each item of information, whether submission of such information is mandatory or voluntary.

(e) The consequences, if any, of not providing all or any part of the requested information.

(f) The principal purpose or purposes within the agency for which the information is to be used.

(g) Any known or foreseeable disclosures which may be made of the information pursuant to subdivision (e) or (f) of Section 1798.24.

(h) The individual's right of access to records containing personal information which are maintained by the agency. This section does not apply to any enforcement document issued by an employee of a law enforcement agency in the performance of his or her duties wherein the violator is provided an exact copy of the document, or to accident reports whereby the parties of interest may obtain a copy of the report pursuant to Section 20012 of the Vehicle Code.

The notice required by this section does not apply to agency requirements for an individual to provide his or her name, identifying number, photograph, address, or similar identifying information, if this information is used only for the purpose of identification and communication with the individual by the agency, except that requirements for an individual's social security number shall conform with the provisions of the Federal Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-579).

1798.18. Each agency shall maintain all records, to the maximum extent possible, with accuracy, relevance, timeliness, and completeness. Such standard need not be met except when such records are used to make any determination about the individual. When an agency transfers a record outside of state government, it shall correct, update, withhold, or delete any portion of the record that it knows or has reason to believe is inaccurate or untimely.

1798.19. Each agency when it provides by contract for the operation or maintenance of records containing personal information to accomplish an agency function, shall cause, consistent with its authority, the requirements of this chapter to be applied to those records. For purposes of Article 10 (commencing with Section 1798.55), any contractor and any employee of the contractor, if the contract is agreed to on or after July 1, 1978, shall be considered to be an employee of an agency. Local government functions mandated by the state are not deemed agency functions within the meaning of this section.

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1798.20. Each agency shall establish rules of conduct for persons involved in the design, development, operation, disclosure, or maintenance of records containing personal information and instruct each such person with respect to such rules and the requirements of this chapter, including any other rules and procedures adopted pursuant to this chapter and the remedies and penalties for noncompliance.

1798.21. Each agency shall establish appropriate and reasonable administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to ensure compliance with the provisions of this chapter, to ensure the security and confidentiality of records, and to protect against anticipated threats or hazards to their security or integrity which could result in any injury.

1798.22. Each agency shall designate an agency employee to be responsible for ensuring that the agency complies with all of the provisions of this chapter.

1798.23. The Department of Justice shall review all personal information in its possession every five years commencing July 1, 1978, to determine whether it should continue to be exempt from access pursuant to Section 1798.40.

Article 6. Conditions of Disclosure

1798.24. No agency may disclose any personal information in a manner that would link the information disclosed to the individual to whom it pertains unless the disclosure of the information is:

- (a) To the individual to whom the information pertains.
- (b) With the prior written voluntary consent of the individual to whom the record pertains, but only if such consent has been obtained not more than 30 days before the disclosure, or in the time limit agreed to by the individual in the written consent.
- (c) To the duly appointed guardian or conservator of the individual or a person representing the individual provided that it can be proven with reasonable certainty through the possession of agency forms, documents or correspondence that such person is the authorized representative of the individual to whom the information pertains.
- (d) To those officers, employees, attorneys, agents, or volunteers of the agency which has custody of the information if the disclosure is relevant and necessary in the ordinary course of the performance of their official duties and is related to the purpose for which the information was acquired.
- (e) To a person, or to another agency where the transfer is necessary for the transferee agency to perform its constitutional or statutory duties, and the use is compatible with a purpose for which the information was collected and the use or transfer is accounted for in accordance with Section 1798.25. With respect to information transferred from a law enforcement or regulatory agency, or information transferred to another law enforcement or regulatory agency, a use is compatible if the use of the information requested is needed in an investigation of

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unlawful activity under the jurisdiction of the requesting agency or for licensing, certification, or regulatory purposes by that agency.

(f) To a governmental entity when required by state or federal law.

(g) Pursuant to the California Public Records Act, Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 6250) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code.

(h) To a person who has provided the agency with advance adequate written assurance that the information will be used solely for statistical research or reporting purposes, but only if the information to be disclosed is in a form that will not identify any individual.

(i) Pursuant to a determination by the agency which maintains information that compelling circumstances exist which affect the health or safety of an individual, if upon the disclosure notification is transmitted to the individual to whom the information pertains at his or her last known address. Disclosure shall not be made if it is in conflict with other state or federal laws.

(j) To the State Archives of the State of California as a record which has sufficient historical or other value to warrant its continued preservation by the California state government, or for evaluation by the Director of General Services or his or her designee to determine whether the record has further administrative, legal, or fiscal value.

(k) To any person pursuant to a subpoena, court order, or other compulsory legal process if, before the disclosure, the agency reasonably attempts to notify the individual to whom the record pertains, and if the notification is not prohibited by law.

(l) To any person pursuant to a search warrant.

(m) Pursuant to Article 3 (commencing with Section 1800) of Chapter 1 of Division 2 of the Vehicle Code.

(n) For the sole purpose of verifying and paying government health care service claims made pursuant to Division 9 (commencing with Section 10000) of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(o) To a law enforcement or regulatory agency when required for an investigation of unlawful activity or for licensing, certification, or regulatory purposes, unless the disclosure is otherwise prohibited by law.

(p) To another person or governmental organization to the extent necessary to obtain information from the person or governmental organization as necessary for an investigation by the agency of a failure to comply with a specific state law which the agency is responsible for enforcing.

(q) To an adopted person and is limited to general background information pertaining to the adopted person's natural parents, provided that the information does not include or reveal the identity of the natural parents.

(r) To a child or a grandchild of an adopted person and disclosure is limited to medically necessary information pertaining to the adopted person's natural parents. However, the information, or the process for obtaining the information, shall not include or reveal the identity of the natural parents. The State Department of Social Services shall adopt regulations governing the release of information pursuant to this subdivision by July 1, 1985. The regulations shall

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require licensed adoption agencies to provide the same services provided by the department as established by this subdivision.

(s) To a committee of the Legislature or to a Member of the Legislature, or his or her staff when authorized in writing by the member, where the member has permission to obtain the information from the individual to whom it pertains or where the member provides reasonable assurance that he or she is acting on behalf of the individual.

(t) To the University of California or a nonprofit educational institution conducting scientific research, provided the request for information includes assurances of the need for personal information, procedures for protecting the confidentiality of the information and assurances that the personal identity of the subject shall not be further disclosed in individually identifiable form.

(u) To an insurer if authorized by Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 10900) of Division 4 of the Vehicle Code. This article shall not be construed to require the disclosure of personal information to the individual to whom the information pertains when that information may otherwise be withheld as set forth in Section 1798.40.

(v) Pursuant to Section 1909, 8009, or 18396 of the Financial Code.

1798.24a. Notwithstanding Section 1798.24, information may be disclosed to any city, county, city and county, or district, or any officer or official thereof, if a written request is made to a local law enforcement agency and the information is needed to assist in the screening of a prospective concessionaire, and any affiliate or associate thereof, as these terms are defined in subdivision (k) of Section 432.7 of the Labor Code for purposes of consenting to, or approving of, the prospective concessionaire's application for, or acquisition of, any beneficial interest in a concession, lease, or other property interest. However, any summary criminal history information that may be disclosed pursuant to this section shall be limited to information pertaining to criminal convictions.

1798.24b. (a) Notwithstanding Section 1798.24, except the last paragraph thereof, information may be disclosed to the protection and advocacy agency designated by the Governor in this state pursuant to federal law to protect and advocate the rights of persons with developmental disabilities and persons with mental illness, as described in Division 4.7 (commencing with Section 4900) of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(b) Information that may be disclosed pursuant to this section includes all of the following information:

(1) Name.

(2) Address.

(3) Telephone number.

(4) Any other information necessary to identify that person whose consent is necessary for either of the following purposes:

(A) To enable the protection and advocacy agency to exercise its authority and investigate incidents of abuse or neglect of persons with developmental disabilities or persons with mental illness.

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(B) To obtain access to records pursuant to Section 4903 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

Article 7. Accounting of Disclosures

1798.25. Each agency shall keep an accurate accounting of the date, nature, and purpose of each disclosure of a record made pursuant to subdivision (i), (k), (l), (o), or (p) of Section 1798.24. This accounting shall also be required for disclosures made pursuant to subdivision (e) or (f) of Section 1798.24 unless notice of the type of disclosure has been provided pursuant to Sections 1798.9 and 1798.10. The accounting shall also include the name, title, and business address of the person or agency to whom the disclosure was made. For the purpose of an accounting of a disclosure made under subdivision (o) of Section 1798.24, it shall be sufficient for a law enforcement or regulatory agency to record the date of disclosure, the law enforcement or regulatory agency requesting the disclosure, and whether the purpose of the disclosure is for an investigation of unlawful activity under the jurisdiction of the requesting agency, or for licensing, certification, or regulatory purposes by that agency. Routine disclosures of information pertaining to crimes, offenders, and suspected offenders to law enforcement or regulatory agencies of federal, state, and local government shall be deemed to be disclosures pursuant to subdivision (e) of Section 1798.24 for the purpose of meeting this requirement.

1798.26. With respect to the sale of information concerning the registration of any vehicle or the sale of information from the files of drivers' licenses, the Department of Motor Vehicles shall, by regulation, establish administrative procedures under which any person making a request for information shall be required to identify himself or herself and state the reason for making the request. These procedures shall provide for the verification of the name and address of the person making a request for the information and the department may require the person to produce the information as it determines is necessary in order to ensure that the name and address of the person are his or her true name and address. These procedures may provide for a 10-day delay in the release of the requested information. These procedures shall also provide for notification to the person to whom the information primarily relates, as to what information was provided and to whom it was provided. The department shall, by regulation, establish a reasonable period of time for which a record of all the foregoing shall be maintained. The procedures required by this subdivision do not apply to any governmental entity, any person who has applied for and has been issued a requester code by the department, or any court of competent jurisdiction.

1798.27. Each agency shall retain the accounting made pursuant to Section 1798.25 for at least three years after the disclosure for which the accounting is made, or until the record is destroyed, whichever is shorter. Nothing in this section shall be construed to require retention of the original documents for a

three-year period, providing that the agency can otherwise comply with the requirements of this section.

1798.28. Each agency, after July 1, 1978, shall inform any person or agency to whom a record containing personal information has been disclosed during the preceding three years of any correction of an error or notation of dispute made pursuant to Sections 1798.35 and 1798.36 if (1) an accounting of the disclosure is required by Section 1798.25 or 1798.26, and the accounting has not been destroyed pursuant to Section 1798.27, or (2) the information provides the name of the person or agency to whom the disclosure was made, or (3) the person who is the subject of the disclosed record provides the name of the person or agency to whom the information was disclosed.

Article 8. Access to Records and Administrative Remedies

1798.30. Each agency shall either adopt regulations or publish guidelines specifying procedures to be followed in order fully to implement each of the rights of individuals set forth in this article.

1798.32. Each individual shall have the right to inquire and be notified as to whether the agency maintains a record about himself or herself. Agencies shall take reasonable steps to assist individuals in making their requests sufficiently specific. Any notice sent to an individual which in any way indicates that the agency maintains any record concerning that individual shall include the title and business address of the agency official responsible for maintaining the records, the procedures to be followed to gain access to the records, and the procedures to be followed for an individual to contest the contents of these records unless the individual has received this notice from the agency during the past year. In implementing the right conferred by this section, an agency may specify in its rules or regulations reasonable times, places, and requirements for identifying an individual who requests access to a record, and for disclosing the contents of a record.

1798.33. Each agency may establish fees to be charged, if any, to an individual for making copies of a record. Such fees shall exclude the cost of any search for and review of the record, and shall not exceed ten cents (\$0.10) per page, unless the agency fee for copying is established by statute.

1798.34. (a) Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, each agency shall permit any individual upon request and proper identification to inspect all the personal information in any record containing personal information and maintained by reference to an identifying particular assigned to the individual within 30 days of the agency's receipt of the request for active records, and within 60 days of the agency's receipt of the request for records that are geographically dispersed or which are inactive and in central storage. Failure to respond within these time limits shall be deemed denial. In addition, the individual shall be

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permitted to inspect any personal information about himself or herself where it is maintained by reference to an identifying particular other than that of the individual, if the agency knows or should know that the information exists. The individual also shall be permitted to inspect the accounting made pursuant to Article 7 (commencing with Section 1798.25).

(b) The agency shall permit the individual, and, upon the individual's request, another person of the individual's own choosing to inspect all the personal information in the record and have an exact copy made of all or any portion thereof within 15 days of the inspection. It may require the individual to furnish a written statement authorizing disclosure of the individual's record to another person of the individual's choosing.

(c) The agency shall present the information in the record in a form reasonably comprehensible to the general public.

(d) Whenever an agency is unable to access a record by reference to name only, or when access by name only would impose an unreasonable administrative burden, it may require the individual to submit such other identifying information as will facilitate access to the record.

(e) When an individual is entitled under this chapter to gain access to the information in a record containing personal information, the information or a true copy thereof shall be made available to the individual at a location near the residence of the individual or by mail, whenever reasonable.

1798.35. Each agency shall permit an individual to request in writing an amendment of a record and, shall within 30 days of the date of receipt of such request:

(a) Make each correction in accordance with the individual's request of any portion of a record which the individual believes is not accurate, relevant, timely, or complete and inform the individual of the corrections made in accordance with their request; or

(b) Inform the individual of its refusal to amend the record in accordance with such individual's request, the reason for the refusal, the procedures established by the agency for the individual to request a review by the head of the agency or an official specifically designated by the head of the agency of the refusal to amend, and the name, title, and business address of the reviewing official.

1798.36. Each agency shall permit any individual who disagrees with the refusal of the agency to amend a record to request a review of such refusal by the head of the agency or an official specifically designated by the head of such agency, and, not later than 30 days from the date on which the individual requests such review, complete such review and make a final determination unless, for good cause shown, the head of the agency extends such review period by 30 days. If, after such review, the reviewing official refuses to amend the record in accordance with the request, the agency shall permit the individual to file with the agency a statement of reasonable length setting forth the reasons for the individual's disagreement.

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1798.37. The agency, with respect to any disclosure containing information about which the individual has filed a statement of disagreement, shall clearly note any portion of the record which is disputed and make available copies of such individual's statement and copies of a concise statement of the reasons of the agency for not making the amendment to any person or agency to whom the disputed record has been or is disclosed.

1798.38. If information, including letters of recommendation, compiled for the purpose of determining suitability, eligibility, or qualifications for employment, advancement, renewal of appointment or promotion, status as adoptive parents, or for the receipt of state contracts, or for licensing purposes, was received with the promise or, prior to July 1, 1978, with the understanding that the identity of the source of the information would be held in confidence and the source is not in a supervisory position with respect to the individual to whom the record pertains, the agency shall fully inform the individual of all personal information about that individual without identification of the source. This may be done by providing a copy of the text of the material with only such deletions as are necessary to protect the identity of the source or by providing a comprehensive summary of the substance of the material. Whichever method is used, the agency shall insure that full disclosure is made to the subject of any personal information that could reasonably in any way reflect or convey anything detrimental, disparaging, or threatening to an individual's reputation, rights, benefits, privileges, or qualifications, or be used by an agency to make a determination that would affect an individual's rights, benefits, privileges, or qualifications. In institutions of higher education, "supervisory positions" shall not be deemed to include chairpersons of academic departments.

1798.39. Sections 1798.35, 1798.36, and 1798.37 shall not apply to any record evidencing property rights.

1798.40. This chapter shall not be construed to require an agency to disclose personal information to the individual to whom the information pertains, if the information meets any of the following criteria:

(a) Is compiled for the purpose of identifying individual criminal offenders and alleged offenders and consists only of identifying data and notations of arrests, the nature and disposition of criminal charges, sentencing, confinement, release, and parole and probation status.

(b) Is compiled for the purpose of a criminal investigation of suspected criminal activities, including reports of informants and investigators, and associated with an identifiable individual.

(c) Is contained in any record which could identify an individual and which is compiled at any stage of the process of enforcement of the criminal laws, from the arrest or indictment stage through release from supervision and including the process of extradition or the exercise of executive clemency.

(d) Is maintained for the purpose of an investigation of an individual's fitness for licensure or public employment, or of a grievance or complaint, or a suspected

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civil offense, so long as the information is withheld only so as not to compromise the investigation, or a related investigation. The identities of individuals who provided information for the investigation may be withheld pursuant to Section 1798.38.

(e) Would compromise the objectivity or fairness of a competitive examination for appointment or promotion in public service, or to determine fitness for licensure, or to determine scholastic aptitude.

(f) Pertains to the physical or psychological condition of the individual, if the agency determines that disclosure would be detrimental to the individual. The information shall, upon the individual's written authorization, be disclosed to a licensed medical practitioner or psychologist designated by the individual.

(g) Relates to the settlement of claims for work related illnesses or injuries and is maintained exclusively by the State Compensation Insurance Fund.

(h) Is required by statute to be withheld from the individual to whom it pertains. This section shall not be construed to deny an individual access to information relating to him or her if access is allowed by another statute or decisional law of this state.

1798.41. (a) Except as provided in subdivision (c), if the agency determines that information requested pursuant to Section 1798.34 is exempt from access, it shall inform the individual in writing of the agency's finding that disclosure is not required by law.

(b) Except as provided in subdivision (c), each agency shall conduct a review of its determination that particular information is exempt from access pursuant to Section 1798.40, within 30 days from the receipt of a request by an individual directly affected by the determination, and inform the individual in writing of the findings of the review. The review shall be conducted by the head of the agency or an official specifically designated by the head of the agency.

(c) If the agency believes that compliance with subdivision (a) would seriously interfere with attempts to apprehend persons who are wanted for committing a crime or attempts to prevent the commission of a crime or would endanger the life of an informant or other person submitting information contained in the record, it may petition the presiding judge of the superior court of the county in which the record is maintained to issue an ex parte order authorizing the agency to respond to the individual that no record is maintained. All proceedings before the court shall be in camera. If the presiding judge finds that there are reasonable grounds to believe that compliance with subdivision (a) will seriously interfere with attempts to apprehend persons who are wanted for committing a crime or attempts to prevent the commission of a crime or will endanger the life of an informant or other person submitting information contained in the record, the judge shall issue an order authorizing the agency to respond to the individual that no record is maintained by the agency. The order shall not be issued for longer than 30 days but can be renewed at 30-day intervals. If a request pursuant to this section is received after the expiration of the order, the agency

must either respond pursuant to subdivision (a) or seek a new order pursuant to this subdivision.

1798.42. In disclosing information contained in a record to an individual, an agency shall not disclose any personal information relating to another individual which may be contained in the record. To comply with this section, an agency shall, in disclosing information, delete from disclosure such information as may be necessary. This section shall not be construed to authorize withholding the identities of sources except as provided in Sections 1798.38 and 1798.40.

1798.43. In disclosing information contained in a record to an individual, an agency need not disclose any information pertaining to that individual which is exempt under Section 1798.40. To comply with this section, an agency may, in disclosing personal information contained in a record, delete from the disclosure any exempt information.

1798.44. This article applies to the rights of an individual to whom personal information pertains and not to the authority or right of any other person, agency, other state governmental entity, or governmental entity to obtain this information.

Article 9. Civil Remedies

1798.45. An individual may bring a civil action against an agency whenever such agency does any of the following:

(a) Refuses to comply with an individual's lawful request to inspect pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 1798.34.

(b) Fails to maintain any record concerning any individual with such accuracy, relevancy, timeliness, and completeness as is necessary to assure fairness in any determination relating to the qualifications, character, rights, opportunities of, or benefits to the individual that may be made on the basis of such record, if, as a proximate result of such failure, a determination is made which is adverse to the individual.

(c) Fails to comply with any other provision of this chapter, or any rule promulgated thereunder, in such a way as to have an adverse effect on an individual.

1798.46. In any suit brought under the provisions of subdivision (a) of Section 1798.45:

(a) The court may enjoin the agency from withholding the records and order the production to the complainant of any agency records improperly withheld from the complainant. In such a suit the court shall determine the matter de novo, and may examine the contents of any agency records in camera to determine whether the records or any portion thereof may be withheld as being exempt from the individual's right of access and the burden is on the agency to sustain its action.

(b) The court shall assess against the agency reasonable attorney's fees and other litigation costs reasonably incurred in any suit under this section in which the complainant has prevailed. A party may be considered to have prevailed even though he or she does not prevail on all issues or against all parties.

1798.47. Any agency that fails to comply with any provision of this chapter may be enjoined by any court of competent jurisdiction. The court may make any order or judgment as may be necessary to prevent the use or employment by an agency of any practices which violate this chapter.

Actions for injunction under this section may be prosecuted by the Attorney General, or any district attorney in this state, in the name of the people of the State of California whether upon his or her own complaint, or of a member of the general public, or by any individual acting in his or her own behalf.

1798.48. In any suit brought under the provisions of subdivision (b) or (c) of Section 1798.45, the agency shall be liable to the individual in an amount equal to the sum of:

(a) Actual damages sustained by the individual, including damages for mental suffering.

(b) The costs of the action together with reasonable attorney's fees as determined by the court.

1798.49. An action to enforce any liability created under Sections 1798.45 to 1798.48, inclusive, may be brought in any court of competent jurisdiction in the county in which the complainant resides, or has his principal place of business, or in which the defendant's records are situated, within two years from the date on which the cause of action arises, except that where a defendant has materially and willfully misrepresented any information required under this section to be disclosed to an individual who is the subject of the information and the information so misrepresented is material to the establishment of the defendant's liability to that individual under this section, the action may be brought at any time within two years after discovery by the complainant of the misrepresentation. Nothing in Sections 1798.45 to 1798.48, inclusive, shall be construed to authorize any civil action by reason of any injury sustained as the result of any information practice covered by this chapter prior to July 1, 1978. The rights and remedies set forth in this chapter shall be deemed to be nonexclusive and are in addition to all those rights and remedies which are otherwise available under any other provision of law.

1798.50. A civil action shall not lie under this article based upon an allegation that an opinion which is subjective in nature, as distinguished from a factual assertion, about an individual's qualifications, in connection with a personnel action concerning such an individual, was not accurate, relevant, timely, or complete.

Excerpts from California Statutes

1798.51. Where a remedy other than those provided in Articles 8 and 9 is provided by law but is not available because of lapse of time an individual may obtain a correction to a record under this chapter but such correction shall not operate to revise or restore a right or remedy not provided by this chapter that has been barred because of lapse of time.

1798.53. Any person, other than an employee of the state or of a local government agency acting solely in his or her official capacity, who intentionally discloses information, not otherwise public, which they know or should reasonably know was obtained from personal information maintained by a state agency or from "records" within a "system of records" (as these terms are defined in the Federal Privacy Act of 1974 (P. L. 93-579; 5 U.S.C. 552a)) maintained by a federal government agency, shall be subject to a civil action, for invasion of privacy, by the individual to whom the information pertains. In any successful action brought under this section, the complainant, in addition to any special or general damages awarded, shall be awarded a minimum of two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) in exemplary damages as well as attorney's fees and other litigation costs reasonably incurred in the suit. The right, remedy, and cause of action set forth in this section shall be nonexclusive and is in addition to all other rights, remedies, and causes of action for invasion of privacy, inherent in Section 1 of Article I of the California Constitution.

Article 10. Penalties

1798.55. The intentional violation of any provision of this chapter or of any rules or regulations adopted thereunder, by an officer or employee of any agency shall constitute a cause for discipline, including termination of employment.

1798.56. Any person who willfully requests or obtains any record containing personal information from an agency under false pretenses shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and fined not more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000), or imprisoned not more than one year, or both.

1798.57. Except for disclosures which are otherwise required or permitted by law, the intentional disclosure of medical, psychiatric, or psychological information in violation of the disclosure provisions of this chapter is punishable as a misdemeanor if the wrongful disclosure results in economic loss or personal injury to the individual to whom the information pertains.

Article 11. Miscellaneous Provisions

1798.60. An individual's name and address may not be distributed for commercial purposes, sold, or rented by an agency unless such action is specifically authorized by law.

Excerpts from California Statutes

1798.61. (a) Nothing in this chapter shall prohibit the release of only names and addresses of persons possessing licenses to engage in professional occupations.

(b) Nothing in this chapter shall prohibit the release of only names and addresses of persons applying for licenses to engage in professional occupations for the sole purpose of providing those persons with informational materials relating to available professional educational materials or courses.

1798.62. Upon written request of any individual, any agency which maintains a mailing list shall remove the individual's name and address from such list, except that such agency need not remove the individual's name if such name is exclusively used by the agency to directly contact the individual.

1798.63. The provisions of this chapter shall be liberally construed so as to protect the rights of privacy arising under this chapter or under the Federal or State Constitution.

1798.64. (a) Each agency record which is accepted by the Director of General Services for storage, processing, and servicing in accordance with provisions of the State Administrative Manual for the purposes of this chapter shall be considered to be maintained by the agency which deposited the record and shall continue to be subject to the provisions of this chapter. The Director of General Services shall not disclose the record except to the agency which maintains the record, or pursuant to rules established by such agency which are not inconsistent with the provisions of this chapter.

(b) Each agency record pertaining to an identifiable individual which was or is transferred to the State Archives as a record which has sufficient historical or other value to warrant its continued preservation by the California state government, prior to or after July 1, 1978, shall, for the purposes of this chapter, be considered to be maintained by the archives.

1798.66. The time limits specified in Article 8 (commencing with Section 1798.30) may be extended to 60 days by the Franchise Tax Board if the following conditions exist:

- (a) The request is made during the period January 1 through June 30; and
- (b) The records requested are stored on magnetic tape.

1798.67. Where an agency has recorded a document creating a lien or encumbrance on real property in favor of the state, nothing herein shall prohibit any such agency from disclosing information relating to the identity of the person against whom such lien or encumbrance has been recorded for the purpose of distinguishing such person from another person bearing the same or a similar name.

1798.68. (a) Information which is permitted to be disclosed under the provisions of subdivision (e), (f), or (o), of Section 1798.24 shall be provided when

Excerpts from California Statutes

requested by a district attorney. A district attorney may petition a court of competent jurisdiction to require disclosure of information when an agency fails or refuses to provide the requested information within 10 working days of a request. The court may require the agency to permit inspection unless the public interest or good cause in withholding such records clearly outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

(b) Disclosure of information to a district attorney under the provisions of this chapter shall effect no change in the status of the records under any other provision of law.

1798.69. (a) Except as provided in subdivision (b), the State Board of Equalization may not release the names and addresses of individuals who are registered with, or are holding licenses or permits issued by, the State Board of Equalization except to the extent necessary to verify resale certificates or to administer the tax and fee provisions of the Revenue and Taxation Code.

(b) Nothing in this section shall prohibit the release by the State Board of Equalization to, or limit the use by, any federal or state agency, or local government, of any data collected by the board that is otherwise authorized by law.

Article 12. Construction With Other Laws

1798.70. This chapter shall be construed to supersede any other provision of state law, including Section 6253.5 of the Government Code, or any exemption in Section 6254 or 6255 of the Government Code, which authorizes any agency to withhold from an individual any record containing personal information which is otherwise accessible under the provisions of this chapter.

1798.71. This chapter shall not be deemed to abridge or limit the rights of litigants, including parties to administrative proceedings, under the laws, or case law, of discovery of this state.

1798.72. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to authorize the disclosure of any record containing personal information, other than to the subject of such records, in violation of any other law.

1798.73. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to deny or limit any right of privacy arising under Section 1 of Article I of the California Constitution.

1798.74. The provisions of Chapter 13 (commencing with Section 67110) of Part 40 of the Education Code shall, with regard to student records, prevail over the provisions of this chapter.

1798.75. This chapter shall not be deemed to supersede Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 6250) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code, except as to the provisions of Sections 1798.60, 1798.69, and 1798.70.

1798.76. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to revoke, modify, or alter in any manner any statutory provision or any judicial decision which (a) authorizes an individual to gain access to any law enforcement record, or (b) authorizes discovery in criminal or civil litigation.

1798.77. Each agency shall ensure that no record containing personal information shall be modified, transferred, or destroyed to avoid compliance with any of the provisions of this chapter. In the event that an agency fails to comply with the provisions of this section, an individual may bring a civil action and seek the appropriate remedies and damages in accordance with the provisions of Article 9 (commencing with Section 1798.45). An agency shall not remove or destroy personal information about an individual who has requested access to the information before allowing the individual access to the record containing the information.

1798.78. This chapter shall not be deemed to supersede the provisions of Chapter 1299 of the Statutes of 1976.